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Warlick Drive sewer pipe still under repair

When attempting to make a permanent repair early this morning to the Warlick Drive sewer pipe leak, another hole was accidentally punched into the pipe with a backhoe. The original hole has been successfully plugged, but waste water leakage from the second hole is being diverted back in the system via a manhole. The second hole is 2-3 inches in diameter.

When the second hole was punched into the pipe, an undetermined amount of sewage was spilled. A significant portion of that was contained on the site, but some sewage did escape into the marsh.

The repairs to the pipe can only be made by stopping waste water flowing into the pipe. The plan now is to shut the system down again early Thursday morning when flow is lowest, from 1:30-5 a.m., to make a repair to the second hole, and to complete the repair on the first hole.

The repair efforts are significantly impacted by conditions at the site, including soft marsh ground that cannot support heavy equipment, and the fact that another 18-inch sewer pipe is located just a few feet away from the pipe being worked on. In addition, crews have a limited time to make the repairs without overwhelming the waste water system.

"We regret the impact this situation has had on our environment and the inconvenience to citizens living in the area. Our crews are working very hard in very difficult conditions and we will continue our efforts tonight to do the very best we can to get these repairs completed," said Public Utilities Director Hugh Caldwell.

Although the site has been contained, city officials advise that some waste water has spilled out during the repair process. Results of water samples in the creek taken Tuesday show elevated levels of fecal coli and ammonia. Testing will continue today.

As a precaution, the city recommends that citizens not come into contact with the water.

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For more information, contact Public Information Officer Malissa Talbert at 470-8720.